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SUBJECT: BELGIUM: COUNTRY TERRORISM REPORT 2009

REFERENCE:STATE 109980

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12. Begin text of report:

The Belgian government recognizes that terrorism is a serious threat. Belgian agencies identify possible terrorist threats, respond to those threats, and cooperate with international partners in counterterrorism. Belgium will hold the rotating European Union (EU) presidency from July to December 2010, and the Belgian government began developing an anti-radicalization program in 2009 it hopes to unveil during its presidency.

The inner-ministerial College of Security and Intelligence meets regularly and makes reports and recommendations to the Belgian government. The College is chaired by the Prime Minister's Security Advisor. The Coordinating Body for Threat Analysis (OCAM/OCAD) develops common threat analyses that are discussed in the College. The College includes representatives from OCAM/OCAD, the State Security Service, the Federal Police, Customs, and the Ministries of Transport, Finance, Interior, Justice, and Foreign Affairs. As an original Visa Waiver Program (VWP) country, Belgium is currently considering HSPD-6 and the PCSC as required under U.S. law to remain in the program.

Belgian authorities are concerned with potential terrorist activities by domestic extremist Muslim, Left-Wing, Right-Wing, anarchists, and animal rights groups. International groups of concern to Belgium include extremists from the Maghreb, North Africa, al-Qa'ida, and the Democratic People's Party of Kurdistan (DHKP/C). The Kongra-Gel (KGK) formerly known as the PKK is a known presence in Belgium and has television production studios in Denderleeuw. A fine levied on the studio several years ago did not impact the production facility significantly.

Belgian authorities have the ability to create a national list of terrorist entities, separate from UN and EU lists, coordinated by OCAM, including financiers and suspected financiers of terrorism. This information allowed Belgian authorities to develop and apply a national capacity to freeze assets, in addition to UN- and EU-mandated asset freezes that Belgium already implements. Belgium cooperates with the United States on security programs such as the Container Security Initiative, Megaports, and export controls.

Prosecutors continue to investigate the case of five suspected terrorists arrested in December 2008. Another nine persons taken into custody at the same time were released due to lack of evidence shortly thereafter. Belgium ratified the U.S.-EU Multilateral Legal Assistance and Extradition Agreements in July 2008. Belgium's prosecutors are cooperating with the United States in the extradition of Nizar Trabelsi, who was convicted of plotting to attack American soldiers at Kleine Brogel Air Base in Belgium.

Belgium's troop commitment to NATO ISAF operations in Afghanistan has increased from about 250 troops in 2008 to nearly 540 in 2009. Belgians provide security for Kabul airport, operate and maintain six F-16s in Kandahar, run one Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team in Kunduz with a second due to arrive in January 2010, and participate in a German-run Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT). End text of report.

GUTMAN